

Date submitted (UTC): 3/18/2014 2:14:46 AM  
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Comments:  
Panther (Big) Creek Hot Springs Geothermal Leasing Project

District Ranger Jay Winfield  
Salmon-Cobalt Ranger District  
311 McPherson St S  
Salmon, ID 83467

Dear Mr. Winfield:

Please find below our comments on the above proposed Project. They are not an attachment as we had difficulty doing so as an attachment.

Sincerely,

David G. Hade  
Martha A. Russell Hade  
208-394-2118

David G. Hade

Martha A. Russell Hade

304 Panther Creek Road

Shoup, ID 83469-6515

208-394-2118

March 17, 2014

District Ranger Jay Winfield

Salmon-Cobalt Ranger District

311 McPherson Street South

Salmon, ID 83467

RE: Panther (Big) Creek Hot Springs Geothermal Leasing Project

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Panther (Big) Creek Hot Springs Geothermal Leasing Project.

While both my wife and I enthusiastically support the development of alternative energy sources, we both agree that this particular site for geothermal energy development leaves many questions and concerns, not just as private property owners within the proposed 9-square mile lease area but for all Idaho and U.S. citizens who come to this area to hunt, fish and recreate.

We could potentially be more adversely effected by this geothermal development than anyone else living or visiting the area, due to the fact that we are directly within the proposed 9-square mile area and use the Panther (Big) Creek Hot Springs for our household domestic water and electricity produced from our hydro-electric plant. We have paid the State of Idaho a yearly Water Transmission Fee since 1983 for running our hydro-electric plant. My parents filed and obtained Water Rights for our property from the Panther (Big) Creek Hot Springs in 1967.

We agree with many of the concerns stated in correspondence received by your office from the State of Idaho/Dept of Water Resources, Mr. Robert Wagenknecht, Former Forest Service Employee, Rebecca Wiegand of Lowman, ID, the Walla Walla District, Corps of Engineers/Department of the Army, the Salmon Region Idaho Dept of Fish and Game, Katie Fite with the Western Watersheds, and the Idaho Conservation League. Because of this we will not duplicate many statements/concerns made by these agencies or individuals, but add our own.

The following are our concerns with the lease approval of this project:

1. We believe due diligence was not made with providing copies of the Panther (Big) Creek Hot Springs Geothermal Leasing Project Description dated February 2014 to all residents of the River from Hwy 93 in North Fork and those who attended the March 27, 2012 Meeting held in Salmon on the proposed project. My brother and his wife were attendees at that meeting and did not receive a copy of the Project Description and the only other residents in the area we know of that received a copy of the Project Description was Ms. Carla Bevan, our neighbor at 4.5 miles Panther Creek Road.

Ms. Piper, with whom we had a lengthy discussion about this proposed project told us when requesting residents names from the North Fork Forest Service Office, never received a response back from the office for her to mail the project description to. We believe if she had, your office would have received more comments and concerns about the proposed lease. From our perspective, the Forest Service could ascertain that there were little if no concerns about the proposed lease but our own. At our request Ms. Piper did send us five additional copies to hand out to the neighbors we believe did not receive copies.

2. Ms. Piper said she had researched a proposed like geothermal project nationwide, and has found none. Our concern with the lack of an example developed geothermal lease of this scope on Forest Service Land, is there are no conclusive, definitive outcomes, positive or negative that can be made to make a comparison of whether this proposed project lease is an appropriately viable development for geothermal power.

3. We are concerned how a development of this scope may alter or destroy the Panther (Big) Creek Hot Springs aquifer waters, and adversely affect our ability to continue to use the Panther (Big) Creek Hot Springs for our household domestic water use as well as operate our Hydro-Electric Plant for our household electricity.

4. Because this area is within the Clear Creek Fire of 2000 and the burnout on Panther Creek of 2007 due to the fire at the mouth of Panther Creek and the Main Salmon River, the length of time it has taken for any Douglass Fir or Ponderosa Pine to regenerate, our recommendation would be no clearing be allowed or waivers given. When you drive the first three miles of the Panther Creek you see very little regrowth, if any in some areas where there previously were these conifers, 14 and 7 years later of each fire and burnout and scarce.

5. As stated in the Project Description, because any proposed drilling and demobilization equipment, ie full-sized tractor-trailer rigs may last for several weeks and 24 hours per day requiring 15-20 trips per day, the 10-40 daily trips for commuting and hauling in equipment and there is no history of a like Federal geothermal lease project, we are concerned about the daily traffic past our home. From Panther Creek Road our house is 20 feet, our Hydro Electric Plant is 50 feet and our barn is 50 feet

Most vehicles that traverse the road daily are private vehicles who travel anywhere from 20-40 mph past our house on Panther Creek Road, not heavy-duty commercial or industrial type vehicles which are much larger and at those speeds we are concerned about any adverse effects these construction vehicles will have on our house, hydro-electric plant and barn, and the culvert underneath the road at the entrance to our house that carries the water from the Panther (Big) Creek Hot Springs that runs into Panther Creek.

We request assurance traffic control is enforced within the project description boundaries, Panther Creek Road, and the Salmon River Road, as the increased traffic will effect all local residents year-round, as well as those traveling to the area for recreational, hunting and fishing use.

6. Due to the past history of old and poor mining practices of Blackbird Creek (20 miles away from our property) and the Cobalt Mine over a period of approximately 40 years, all properties below Blackbird Creek on Panther Creek have adversely affected the soils and water from the Colbalt Mine by arsenic and other various chemicals. We are concerned that with a project of this size and scope that similar industrial practices that are not predicted might occur, adversely affecting the quality of our water supply.

7. I grew up here, moving here with my family in 1967 when I was 11 years old. I have seen what in addition to the mining practices how the logging practices affected Panther (Big) Creek Hot Springs. The soils in the area are unstable. The regeneration of the Ponderosa Pine and Douglass Fir trees has taken at least 50 years to re-establish after the Hot Springs was logged.

Howard Cassel, a deceased and former Colbalt District Employee who I worked with in 1974 through 1976, as a part of his job, planted trees in the Panther (Big) Creek Hot Springs drainage seven different seasons, due to the inability of the trees to regenerate in the poor soils. This area is comprised of largely decomposed granite, which I believe attributes to the difficulty of these trees regenerating. My concern is with this project development and the forest vegetation, this difficulty with conifer regeneration because of the soils, makes this project less environmentally feasible for this area.

We feel that this lease is not a properly sited geothermal lease project that will protect the environment and all inhabitants, and provide a substantial increase of energy to the power grid because there is no example of a project to compare it to of this scope and scale on Federal Land. This area may be too environmentally sensitive for all the stipulations stated in the project description and we feel caution needs to be taken if this lease is approved, which we've been told it will be.

We want assurance that monitoring and mitigation of any damage created on our property and buildings is included in the project description under the exploration, drilling, utilization, and reclamation and abandonment phases of this proposed project.

Please keep us on the list to receive both a hard copy and electronic copy of all upcoming correspondence and documents from all those involved in this proposed geothermal lease.

Sincerely,

David G. Hade

Martha A. Russell Hade

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cc: Piper Goessel

Geologist, SCNF

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